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Bodytext

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Bodytext
output 3
Simon Biggs

project introduction

Bodytext is a performance work that involves speech, movement, sound and the body. The dancer's movement and speech are re-mediated within an augmented environment employing motion tracking, voice recognition, interpretative language systems, digital projection and audio resynthesis. Acquired speech, of an imagined dance description, is re-written through physical interaction with the projected digital display and audio environment. The performer's movement causes the recorded/written texts to move, driven by video tracking. The textual objects interact and recombine, during which they exchange syntactic elements making new descriptions that determine a new dance. The audio of the spoken text is re-mediated and sonified. The text objects emerge as new texts, graphical compositions and sound events. Dance and media systems generate an ever evolving new dance description, which in each iteration is danced again.

The speech and movement data derive from the dancer's personal investigation of 'bodystories', relating to autobiographical accounts, embodied memories, description of performative movements, and/or phenomenal experience. This is data of which only the dancer has direct experience. Sharing this personal information, in the context of a performative disclosure, shifts the audience from spectators to active participants in an act of professing and performative enacting. Private data, once released into the public domain, is transformed into having a life of its own. Bodytext seeks insight into the relations between kinaesthetic experience, memory, agency and language, and how private data, when released into the public domain, is recontextualised and interpreted.

Dancer, audience and machine are enmeshed in a recursive dynamic they must both follow to its (il)logical conclusion. The innate entropy of the system gives structure to the overall work and from this emerges what is, in the end, a rather tragic descent into chaos and eventual stasis.

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project specification

2 high-specification Apple Macintosh computers with current version of operating system

1 low-light colour PAL (4:3) Firewire video camera

1 suitable video camera lens for exhibition space

10 metre Firewire cable

1 XGA 7000+ lumen video projector with ceiling mounting (landscape format)

1 Projector lens appropriate for space to achieve desired projection size (see dimensions below)

1 front video projection screen, minimum 6 metres wide x 4.2 metres high

1 10 metre RGB 15 pin component video cable

4 dimmable and focusable Fresnel lights with barn doors, 4 profile lamps with dimmer

1 digital voice acquisition speech-to-text microphone

1 Pacorama audio synthesis unit

Concert hall quality quadrophonic sound system

The performance space should have totally controllable lighting and complete blackout, with no ambient or natural light. All light will be provided by the projection and the lights. The floor area is 6 metres deep, 8 metres wide and ceiling height at least 5 metres. A professional dance floor is required.

<http://www.littlepig.org.uk/installations/bodytext/index.htm>

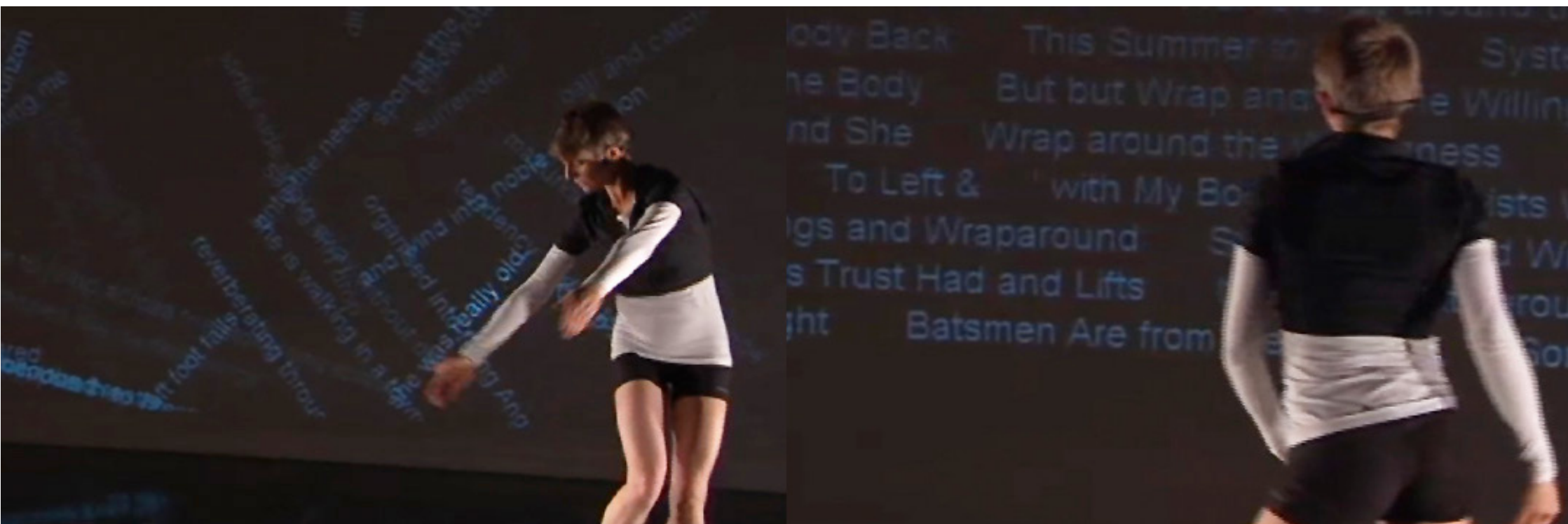
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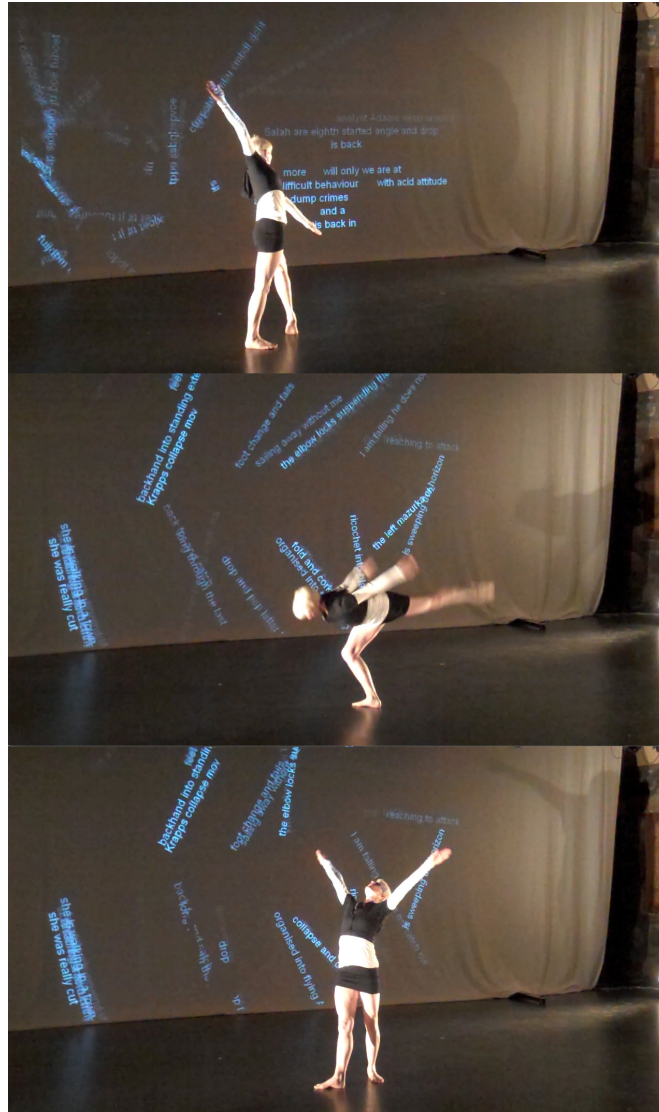
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standing on the steps falling up travelling steps in three gather round to lift
parting forwards to grab and shoot anchor that heel open and closed loop
slide and slice across the knee is this remembering or stealing hand on heart
collar bone drifts to the left I got the news in a phone call
feeling for the floor rollback double back feeling quite scared then let go and jump
leg swings open and deep breath seems like eternity falling
fold drop and twist the spine arms flap like black wings and loop the shoulder over
but catching the foot cuts the neck wind across and twist
knock the arm back to swing to ricochet handstand to lift and wrap around
difficult behaviour with tilted attitude reach to attack slide side angle and drop
surrender fall and catch I am falling he does not catch elbow rotates backhand
long through the back in their minds eye crack on stone and collapse

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project outcomes

Bodytext was developed by the artists, Simon Biggs, Sue Hawksley (University of Bedfordshire) and Garth Paine (Arizona State University) whilst in residence at the Bundanon Arts Centre, New South Wales, and the VIPRE interactive arts Lab at the University of Western Sydney:

2010: premiered at SEAM Festival, Critical Path, Sydney, Australia. Curated by Margie Medlin. Other presenters included Christian Ziegler, Volker Kuchelmeister and Brad Miller. <http://seam2010.blogspot.co.uk/>

2010: Performed as part of the Figures of the Visceral conference at Inspace, the University of Edinburgh, UK. Convened by Kriss Ravetto, University of Edinburgh. Other presenters included Martin Hammer, James Leach, Nikolaj Lubecker, Laura Marks and Martin Parker. <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/film-performance-media-arts/news-and-events/the-visceral/figures-of-the-visceral>

2012: Performed at the Mondavi Centre, University of California Davis, within the Gaming the Game conference, convened by Colin Milburn and Kriss Ravetto, University of California Davis. Other presenters included Mario Biagioli, Julian Bleeker, Mia Consalvo, Tim Lenoir, Rita Raley, McKenzie Wark and Sha Xin Wei. http://technoculture.ucdavis.edu/krissravetto/GamingtheGame/conference_videogame.html

Jointly authored papers by the artists on Bodytext have been presented at Multimodal Communication: Language, Performance and Digital Media, Lisbon Portugal May 2-4 2013 and the International Symposium on Electronic Art, Sydney Australia June 11-14 2013.

A text on Bodytext is in preparation for the Leonardo Journal of Art and Science and a book, based on the Gaming the Game conference proceedings, is in publication, authored by Colin Milburn and Kriss Ravetto, expected to be published later in 2013.

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